



Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

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NOAA Fisheries Service Announces Closure Date for the South Atlantic Recreational Black Sea Bass Fishery

NOAA Fisheries Service has determined that the 2010-2011 recreational annual catch limit (ACL) of 409,000 pounds for black sea bass has been reached. As a result, the recreational sector for black sea bass in federal waters of the South Atlantic from 35°15.19' N. lat., (the latitude of Cape Hatteras Light, NC) to Key West, FL will be closed, effective 12:01 a.m. (local time) February 12, 2011, through 12:01 a.m. June 1, 2011.

For vessels which have a valid federal charter vessel/headboat permit for South Atlantic Snapper-grouper, the closure applies to state and federal waters. The operator of a vessel that has been issued a federal for-hire permit for snapper-grouper must have landed any black sea bass harvested from either state or federal waters prior to 12:01 a.m., local time, February 12, 2011.

Background:

Black sea bass are overfished (population is too low), and experiencing overfishing (rate of removals is too high). The commercial quota is 309,000 pounds gutted weight, and the recreational allocation is 409,000 pounds gutted weight. Harvest levels must be kept below these levels to prevent fish from being removed too quickly, and to rebuild the black sea bass population.

Amendment 17B to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 17B), which becomes effective January 31, 2011, retains these values as the respective commercial and recreational ACLs. Amendment 17B also includes black sea bass accountability measures (AMs), which are actions intended to prevent the ACL from being exceeded. If the ACL is projected to be met, the recreational fishery would be closed. If the ACL is exceeded, the ACL for the following fishing year will be reduced by the amount of the overage. That determination will be made before the next fishing year begins.

Commercial Sector:

Commercial harvest of black sea bass closed on October 7, 2010, because NOAA Fisheries Service projected landings would reach the quota by that time. However, an updated

report indicated that less fish were landed than expected. The commercial sector for black sea bass reopened from 12:01 a.m. December 1, 2010, until 12:01 a.m. December 15, 2010. It remains closed until June 1, 2011.

<u>Black Sea Bass ACLs</u>	<u>Black Sea Bass AMs</u>
<u>Recreational</u> = 409,000 pounds gutted weight	<u>Recreational</u> - if black sea bass are overfished and the ACL is projected to be reached, the recreational fishery would be closed. If the ACL is exceeded, based on a three year running average of landings, the recreational ACL will be reduced the following year by the amount of the overage. For 2011, the average landings of 2010 and 2011 is used. For 2012 and beyond, the most recent three-year running average is used.
<u>Commercial</u> = 309,000 pounds gutted weight	<u>Commercial</u> - fishery closed when ACL is projected to be met.

More information:

Information on these and other actions contained in Amendment 17B can be found on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Web site at <http://www.safmc.net>, in the [Black Sea Bass Frequently Asked Questions](#), in the [Amendment 17B Frequently Asked Questions](#), and at the following NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast Region Web site <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/SASnapperGrouperHomepage.htm>. Written requests for information may be sent to:

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